

## Lesson 8 – Gospel to the Gentiles

Text: Acts 10

Main Characters: God, Cornelius, Peter

Key Passages:

- Acts 10:34-35 – God shows no partiality; God accepts whoever fears him and works righteousness.
- Acts 10:44-48 – The Holy Spirit came upon the Gentiles and they were subsequently baptized.

Main Storyline:

There was a man in Caesarea named Cornelius; he was a Roman centurion, a soldier who was in charge of 100 soldiers in the Roman army. Cornelius generously gave to the poor and prayed to God often. Although he and his household were very devout, they were not Jews or proselytes and did not follow the Jewish laws. Jews of that time were not permitted to associate with Gentiles like Cornelius and his family.

One afternoon, Cornelius was praying to God when, in a vision, he saw an angel of the Lord appear to him. The angel called him by name and informed him that God had taken note of his prayers and alms. The angel instructed Cornelius to send men to Joppa and ask for Peter to come, for he would give further instructions to Cornelius. Cornelius was afraid when the angel first appeared, but he did exactly what he was told to do, sending two servants and a soldier to Joppa to find Peter.

The next day, as the three men were approaching Joppa, Peter went on top of the house where he was staying to pray. Then he became very hungry and wanted to eat. While the others in the house were getting ready for the meal, Peter saw a strange vision. He saw an object like a great sheet held by its four corners being lowered from the sky. The sheet was carrying all types of animals that were considered to be unclean for consumption, such as certain wild animals and birds. Peter then heard a voice, “Rise, Peter; kill and eat.” Peter objected, for he had never eaten anything common or unclean. The voice spoke again, “What God has cleansed, you must not call common.” This was done three times, and then the object went back into the sky.

While Peter was pondering the meaning of the vision, the three men from Cornelius arrived and asked for him. The Holy Spirit informed Peter that three men were seeking him. Peter was to go down to them and go with them without doubting, for the Holy Spirit had sent them. Peter went down and asked the men to explain why they had come. The men said that Cornelius, a good man, had been instructed by an angel to bring Peter back to his house to hear what Peter had to say. Peter invited the men to stay for the night, and the next day, Peter and some others from Joppa accompanied Cornelius’ three men back to Caesarea.

The following day, they reached Caesarea and returned to Cornelius’ house. Cornelius was waiting for them, and he had gathered his close friends and relatives to the house as well. As Peter came in, Cornelius fell down and worshipped him. Peter lifted him up and said, “Stand up; I myself am a man.” Peter told Cornelius how God had shown him that he should not call any man common or unclean (such as the Gentiles, including Cornelius). Therefore, he came right away and without objection when he was called. Then Peter asked Cornelius why he had sent for him. Cornelius explained what he had seen and heard in the vision, and then he asked Peter to teach all the things that God had commanded for them to do.

Peter promptly began to teach them about God and Jesus. He started by pointing out that God shows no partiality; God will accept anyone who fears him and works righteousness. He then taught about Jesus and how he had died on the cross and was resurrected. Peter pointed out that, through Jesus’ name, anyone who believed in Jesus could be forgiven of their sins. While Peter was still speaking, the Holy Spirit came upon all those who heard him preach, and they began to speak in tongues and praise God. Peter, realizing what had happened, asked, “Who could say that these people should not be baptized?” Then Cornelius and the others were baptized, and they asked Peter to stay with them for a few more days.

Lessons/Applications:

- 1.) God will accept any person, regardless of who they are or what they have done, if they obey the Lord.
- 2.) If one is seeking God and trying to learn and do what is right, God will make a way for him to find it.